HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTARS
4
$2.25
$2.75 CAN
MAR 91
EPIC COMICS®

Mark EVANIER AND DAN SPIEGLE

HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTARS™

Read more FREE comics on ReadComicOnline.to

writer
MARK EVANIER
illustrator
DAN SPIEGLE
assistant editor
ERIC FEIN

EPIC COMICS
colorist
TOM LUTH
editor
DANNY FINGEROTH

letterer
CARRIE SPIEGLE
resident cartoonist
SERGIO ARAGONÉS
executive editor, epic comics
CARL POTTS

Hello once more. Nothing's changed since last month. I'm still *Mark Evanier*, this is artist *Dan Spiegle* and the two of us are off exploring Hollywood and dragging you all along for the ride. When I was seventeen years old, I took one of those movie lot tours, back when they were actually *studio tours* and not rolling amusement parks. Even then, the information dispensed by the tour guide rarely approximated the truth and, at the end of the tour, I cornered our guide and itemized the factual inaccuracies in the *shpiel* he had just laid on one motley group of tourists. To my surprise, he said, "The boss here has been looking for someone who knows this stuff to write us a script. You interested?" I was. And that's how I wound up writing the first "script" I ever got paid for that was spoken aloud by anyone. I even conducted a few tours myself, just to test out the material, until the day when a guest asked a question about one of the studio's stars, I responded with a quip that impugned the star's acting ability (or lack, thereof) and later discovered that the star's publicist was on my tram with his in-laws. It was not one of my finer moments. Anyway, here's another issue of **Hollywood Superstars**. Melody's old boy friend is on the critical list (so is this comic, by the way) and you can figure everything out from there...

HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTARS™ Vol. 1, No. 4, March, 1991 issue. Published by EPIC COMICS. Office of Publication: 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016. Published monthly. HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTARS (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) are trademarks of Mark Evanier and Dan Spiegle. Copyright © 1991 Mark Evanier and Dan Spiegle. All rights reserved. "Epic Comics" is a registered trademark of Epic Comics. All other material copyright © 1991 Epic Comics. All rights reserved. Price $2.25 per copy in the U.S. and $2.75 in Canada. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition.

Printed in Canada

A FRIEND PROVIDES CONSTANT REMINDER OF WHO AND WHAT YOU ARE. SO AN OLD FRIEND CAN BE LIKE A KEEPSAKE...SOMETHING TO REMIND YOU WHO AND WHAT YOU WERE.
BUT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU DON'T WANT TO BE REMINDED WHEN YOU WANT TO LEAVE THE OLD YOU BEHIND. NOT FOREVER, JUST FOR A WHILE. JUST SO THE OLD YOU DOESN'T GET IN THE WAY OF THE NEW YOU.
UNFORTUNATELY, IT DOESN'T ALWAYS WORK THAT WAY.

MEL? I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR FRIEND.

SO AM I, LEO.

ANY WORD? I MEAN, ANY CHANGE?

THIRD DEGREE BURNS ON NINETY PERCENT OF HIS BODY. THEY STILL HAVE HIM LISTED AS "CRITICAL."

LISTEN... ANYTHING YOU NEED, ANYTHING I CAN DO...

THANKS, BUT I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANYTHING *ANYBODY* CAN DO.

OKAY. YOU KNOW HOW TO REACH ME. CALL ANYTIME.

OPERATORS ARE STANDING BY TO TAKE YOUR CALL.

I APPRECIATE THAT. I JUST WANT TO WRITE A LETTER TO MY MOTHER ABOUT IT ALL...

Dear Mom,
I'm sorry I haven't written sooner and I am sorry that I am only writing now when I have bad news. Do you remember Ron Gage, that boy I once talked about marrying? You were always saying he was very headstrong and stubborn. Well, he came out here to visit me and to try to get me to marry him now and also he wanted to get into the movie business.
He got a job doing a stunt in a movie called "Skullmen." He was supposed to ride a motorcycle through a fire tunnel. That is a big wooden tunnel that they set on fire. He did it and then for some reason, he went back in. My friend Jerry Naylor who used to be one of the best stunt coordinators said that there should have been a number of safety precautions taken including someone there to stop him from going back in. None of this was done and I am afraid that things did not work out so well for Ron. He is in the hospital now.

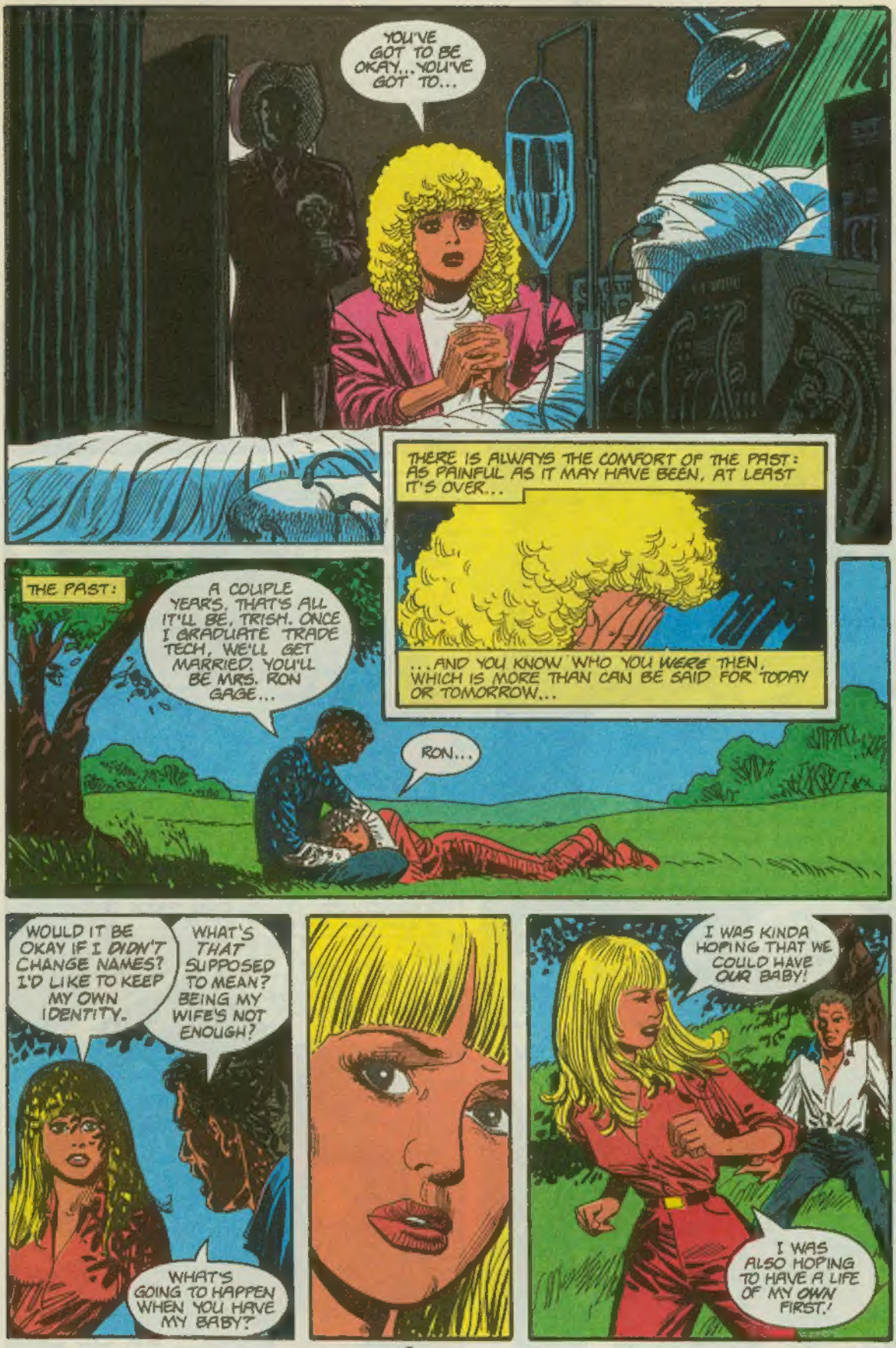
THE WALKING WOUNDED

BY Mark EVANIER AND DAN SPIEGLE

POOR KID. PROBABLY THOUGHT YOU COULDN'T GET HURT IN A MOVIE. AMAZING HOW MANY KIDS BELIEVE IT...
SEEMS LIKE THEY ALL WIND UP WORKING FOR CHAZ REINHART.
MR. NAYLOR? SAM HOPKINS. I'M WITH CAL-OSHA.
THE CALIFORNIA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION. I'M LOOKING INTO THE ACCIDENT.
"ACCIDENT?"
THAT WAS NO "ACCIDENT." I TOLD EVERYONE WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN AND IT HAPPENED.
HOW MANY KIDS ARE GOING TO BE MAIMED BEFORE SOMEONE CLOSES THAT REINHART BUTCHER DOWN?
HE DOES SEEM TO HAVE HAD A NUMBER OF SUCH INCIDENTS ON HIS FILM SHOOTS... SIX IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS...
I'D LIKE YOUR HELP IN BUILDING A CASE AGAINST HIM, DISCOVERING HOW THESE HAPPENED.
I CAN TELL YOU HOW THEY HAPPENED, MR. HOPKINS...
INEPT SAFETY INSPECTORS WHO SHOULD'VE CRACKED DOWN ON THIS GUY AFTER THE FIRST TIME.
JERRY NAYLOR WAS BLAMING A LOT OF PEOPLE FOR THIS ONE... HIMSELF, AMONG THEM...
I WAS THERE. I SHOULD'VE STOPPED IT... SOMEHOW.
MAYBE IT'S TIME I HAD IT OUT WITH REINHART. I'LL HEAD OVER TO HIS TRAINING CAMP...

REINHART HAD A PLACE ON CULVER BOULEVARD WHERE HE TRAINED HIS DISCIPLES...
HE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE YOU, NAYLOR.
JUST TELL HIM.
YOU HEARD THE MAN. I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU.
I'M NOT IN.
TOO BUSY SIGNING UP KIDS TO DO YOUR DIRTY WORK, REINHART?
MAYBE A NICE RECRUITING POSTER? "STEP UP TO SMALL PAY! LOSE A LIMB, LOSE A LIFE. GET ON THE CHAZ REINHART TEAM!"
GET HIM OUTTA HERE.
HOW MUCH HAVE YOU MADE THIS WEEK GETTING KIDS MAIMED, REINHART?
COME ON. MOVE IT.
TAKE YOUR MITTS OFF ME!

AND YOU, TOO!
HOPE HE'S PAYING YOU GUYS WELL...BUT I DOUBT IT.
WELL, THIS IS A PRETTY THOROUGH WASTE OF TIME.
CHAZ, WE STILL NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN DOUBLE EVA GOLD IN THE WING-WALKING SCENE. NO ONE IN OUR FILES IS THE RIGHT BUILD.
GUESS I OUGHTA GO VISIT WHAT'S-HIS-NAME IN THE HOSPITAL... SHOW A LITTLE "COMPASSION."
BUT WE HAVE TWO WEEKS TO FIND SOMEONE--!
GUESS I OUGHTA BUY FLOWERS OR SOMETHING. I'VE NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE...
MELODY KNEW THERE WAS NO POINT IN VISITING. RON DIDN'T EVEN KNOW SHE WAS THERE...
STILL, SHE FELT MORE COMFORTABLE HERE...


YOU'VE GOT TO BE OKAY... YOU'VE GOT TO...
THERE IS ALWAYS THE COMFORT OF THE PAST: AS PAINFUL AS IT MAY HAVE BEEN, AT LEAST IT'S OVER...
...AND YOU KNOW WHO YOU WERE THEN, WHICH IS MORE THAN CAN BE SAID FOR TODAY OR TOMORROW...
THE PAST:
A COUPLE YEARS, THAT'S ALL IT'LL BE, TRISH. ONCE I GRADUATE TRADE TECH, WE'LL GET MARRIED. YOU'LL BE MRS. RON GAGE...
RON...
WOULD IT BE OKAY IF I DIDN'T CHANGE NAMES? I'D LIKE TO KEEP MY OWN IDENTITY.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN? BEING MY WIFE'S NOT ENOUGH?
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN WHEN YOU HAVE MY BABY?
I WAS KINDA HOPING THAT WE COULD HAVE OUR BABY!
I WAS ALSO HOPING TO HAVE A LIFE OF MY OWN FIRST!

EXCUSE ME. HOW IS HE?
YOU! YOU'RE THE REASON THIS HAPPENED TO HIM!
I DIDN'T MAKE HIM DO IT. I OFFERED HIM A JOB AND HE ACCEPTED. AND I SURE AS HELL DIDN'T TELL HIM TO GO BACK IN.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, HONEY?
HE'S OKAY. NO, HE'S NOT OKAY. THE DOCTOR'S DON'T KNOW IF HE'S GOING TO MAKE IT.
PATRICIA GRANVILLE. ACTUALLY, NO. I CHANGED IT. IT'S MELODY BLAKE NOW.
OH, AN ACTRESS, HUH? WELL LISTEN, MELODY BLAKE NOW... I'M REAL SORRY ABOUT YOUR FRIEND.
HOW ABOUT YOU LET ME BUY YOU A CUP OF COFFEE AND WE CAN DISCUSS WHAT WE CAN DO FOR HIM?
I DON'T KNOW...AFTER WHAT HAPPENED...
YOU'RE PROBABLY A VERY SUCCESSFUL ACTRESS, TOO.
ANYONE EVER TELL YOU YOU REMIND THEM OF EVA GOLD?
SOMETIMES, YOU CAN EVEN SHOCK YOURSELF WITH HOW YOU FEEL...
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME? HER OLD BOY FRIEND DAMN NEAR KILLS HIMSELF--
COMEDY PLACE
--AND THE FIRST THOUGHT THAT COMES TO YOUR MIND IS THAT THAT'S ONE LESS GUY IN HER LIFE TO COMPETE WITH YOU!

OH, GOODY. I'M ON AT TWO IN THE MORNING. I SO HATE TRYING TO DO MY ACT WITH ALL THOSE NOISY PEOPLE HERE.
HANEY! PHONE! AND HURRY IT UP. THIS IS OUR RESERVATIONS LINE.
COMEDIAN MAY I HELP YOU?
LEO! GLAD I FOUND YOU LISTEN. WE'VE GOTTA PUT THIS REINHART CLOWN OUTTA BUSINESS.
CAN YOU FIND SOMEONE WHO'S TAKEN HIS TRAINING, JOINED THAT TEAM KAMIKAZE DEAL HE'S GOT?
I CAN SURE TRY. WHAT GOOD'S THAT GONNA DO?
I'LL TELL YOU LATER. JUST LOOK.
AND LOOK, HE DID. AND ASK. AND ASK. EVERYONE WHO STOPPED IN AT THE COMEDY PLACE GOT ASKED...
ME? GET INTO STUNT WORK? YOU'RE KIDDING. I NEED A DOUBLE TO STAND ON A FOOTSTOOL.
I HEARD ABOUT IT. THAT'S THE STUNT SCHOOL, RIGHT? WELL, I NEVER WENT NEAR THEM...
I KNEW A GUY WHO DID BUT HE GOT SMASHED UP IN SOME STUNT. MOVED BACK TO PHILADELPHIA, I THINK. WHY?
JUST ASKING. THANKS.

...WHILE MELODY GOT THE SAME OFFER RON TOOK...
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS? AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO RON?
AN ACCIDENT, I KEEP TELLING YOU. BUT THAT'S ALL IT WAS. AN ACCIDENT. AND ACCIDENTS HAPPEN.
YOU THINK IT DOESN'T RIP MY GUTS OUT WHAT HAPPENED? YOU THINK I DON'T FEEL FOR POOR RON?
WHY, IF THERE WAS SOME WAY I COULD TRADE PLACES WITH HIM, I WOULDN'T HESITATE FOR A MINUTE.
BUT YOU WANT TO GET INTO MOVIES, RIGHT? WELL, THIS WILL GET YOU INTO MOVIES. AND IT PAYS REAL WELL.
I'M SORRY, MR. REINHART I AM NOT INTERESTED IN STUNT WORK.
GEE. I THOUGHT EVERYONE WANTED TO GET INTO THE MOVIES.
BY THAT EVENING, LEO STILL HADN'T FOUND ANYONE...
CLOSEST I GOT WAS A COUPLE FOLKS WHO TURNED HIM DOWN. WHAT'S THE OBJECTIVE HERE?
THE OBJECTIVE IS TO CLOSE CHAZ REINHART DOWN...
HE DOESN'T EVEN TRAIN THOSE KIDS -- JUST SENDS THEM OUT TO DO STUNTS. IF I COULD FIND SOMEONE INSIDE, MAYBE I COULD PROVE IT...

YOU WANT TO FIND SOMEONE WORKING FOR CHAZ?
YEAH. SOMEONE INSIDE WHO CAN DESCR BE WHAT KINDA TRAIN-ING--IF ANY--HE PROVIDES. YOU KNOW ANYONE?
I MIGHT. I JUST MIGHT.
ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE APARTMENT, SHE THOUGHT ABOUT IT:
IT'S CRAZY. AFTER WHAT HE DID TO POOR RON, FOR ME TO GO TO WORK FOR HIM...
...AND YET, MAYBE...
MELODY! I THOUGHT YOU WERE AT THE HOSPITAL.
OH, I'M SORRY, TRILBY. I SHOULD'VE KNOCKED. I HAD SOMETHING ON MY MIND--!
.T S OKAY. ALFRED AND I WERE DISCUSSING THE OZONE LAYER.
NO, IT'S NOT OKAY. I'VE IMPOSED ON YOUR HOSPITALITY TOO LONG. I NEED TO GET MY OWN PLACE.

BUT I CAN'T AFFORD MY OWN PLACE!

I CAN'T AFFORD ANYTHING. I DON'T EVEN HAVE A REAL JOB. JERRY AND LEO SUPPORT ME OUT OF THE GOODNESS OF THER HEARTS...

THAT WAS ANOTHER THING: THE FEELING THAT TOO MANY WERE DOING TOO MUCH FOR HER...

THEY TOOK ME IN...NOW, THEY WANT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT CHAZ REINHART. I CAN CONTRIBUTE...

...AND GET OUT OF TRILBY'S HAIR MAYBE...

ON THE EVENING OF THE DAY WHEN NOTHING HAD MADE SENSE, THIS DID...

...OR SEEMED TO. AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT...

...YES, MR. REINHART... I MEAN, CHAZ. WELL, I THOUGHT IT OVER...

JERRY WILL BE EXCITED. I CAN HELP HIM AND HELP MYSELF AT THE SAME TIME... I CAN'T WAIT TO TELL HIM...

ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND? THAT IS THE STUPIDEST THING I HAVE EVER HEARD IN MY LIFE!

I'M NOT GOING TO DO ANY STUNTS...JUST WORK THERE A FEW WEEKS, GATHER INFO--

AFTER YOU'VE SEEN WHAT THAT MAN CAN DO TO AN INNOCENT, NAIVE KID FROM INDIANA? AFTER ALL I'VE TOLD YOU?

THE NEXT MORN, MELODY DID NOT GET THE REACTION SHE'D EXPECTED...

I WANTED TO HELP.

WELL, YOU PICKED THE STUPIDEST DAMN WAY TO DO IT!

YOU SAW HIM DAMN NEAR KILL YOUR BOY FRIEND! WEREN'T YOU THERE? DIDN'T YOU SEE IT?

I'M SORRY. I'M NO HELP HERE. YOU'D BETTER FIND SOMEBODY ELSE.

WOMEN. ONE OF THE TWO HARDEST SEXES ON THE PLANET TO FIGURE OUT...

LOVELY LADY BUT SOMETIMES THE ELEVATOR DOESN'T GO ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP FLOOR.

THE NEXT MORNING, MELODY REPORTED TO HER NEW "JOB"...

COME ON. I HAVEN'T GOT ALL DAY.

JUST DO IT, HON. I HAVEN'T GOT ALL DAY!

AND CALL ME CHAZ. EVEN CLINT DOES.

UH, I THINK I NEED MORE INSTRUCTION, MR. REINHART--

NOT BAD FOR A FIRST TRY!

YOU SHOULD LAND MORE ON YOUR BUTT.

TRY TO KICK YOUR LEGS MORE SO THEY'LL KNOW IT'S NOT A DUMMY.

GO ON BACK UP AND TAKE ANOTHER JUMP!

THE THOUGHT, "THIS IS NO WAY TO MAKE A LIVING" WENT THROUGH HER MIND...

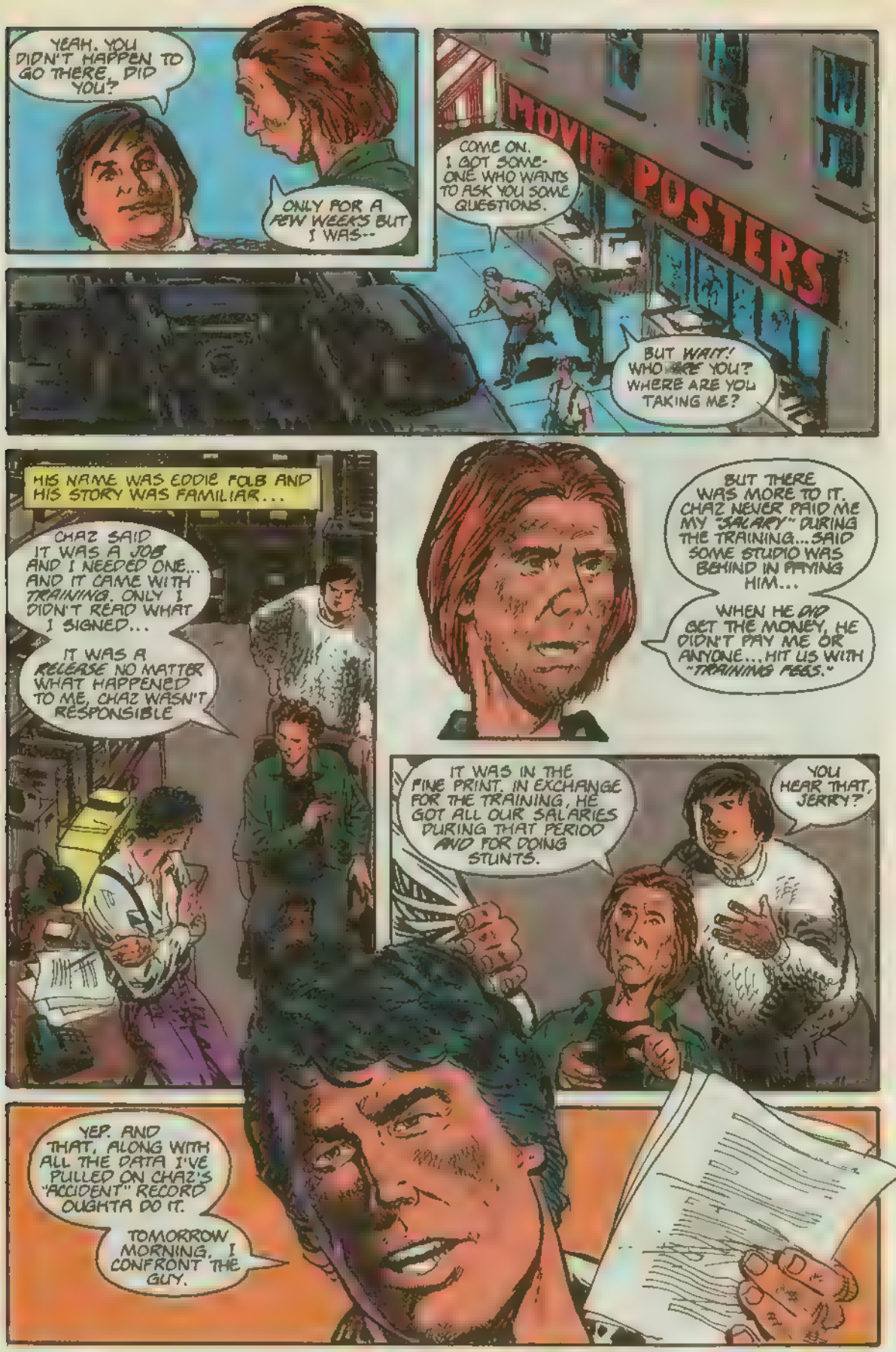
...AND WOULD REVISIT OFTEN DURING THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED ..

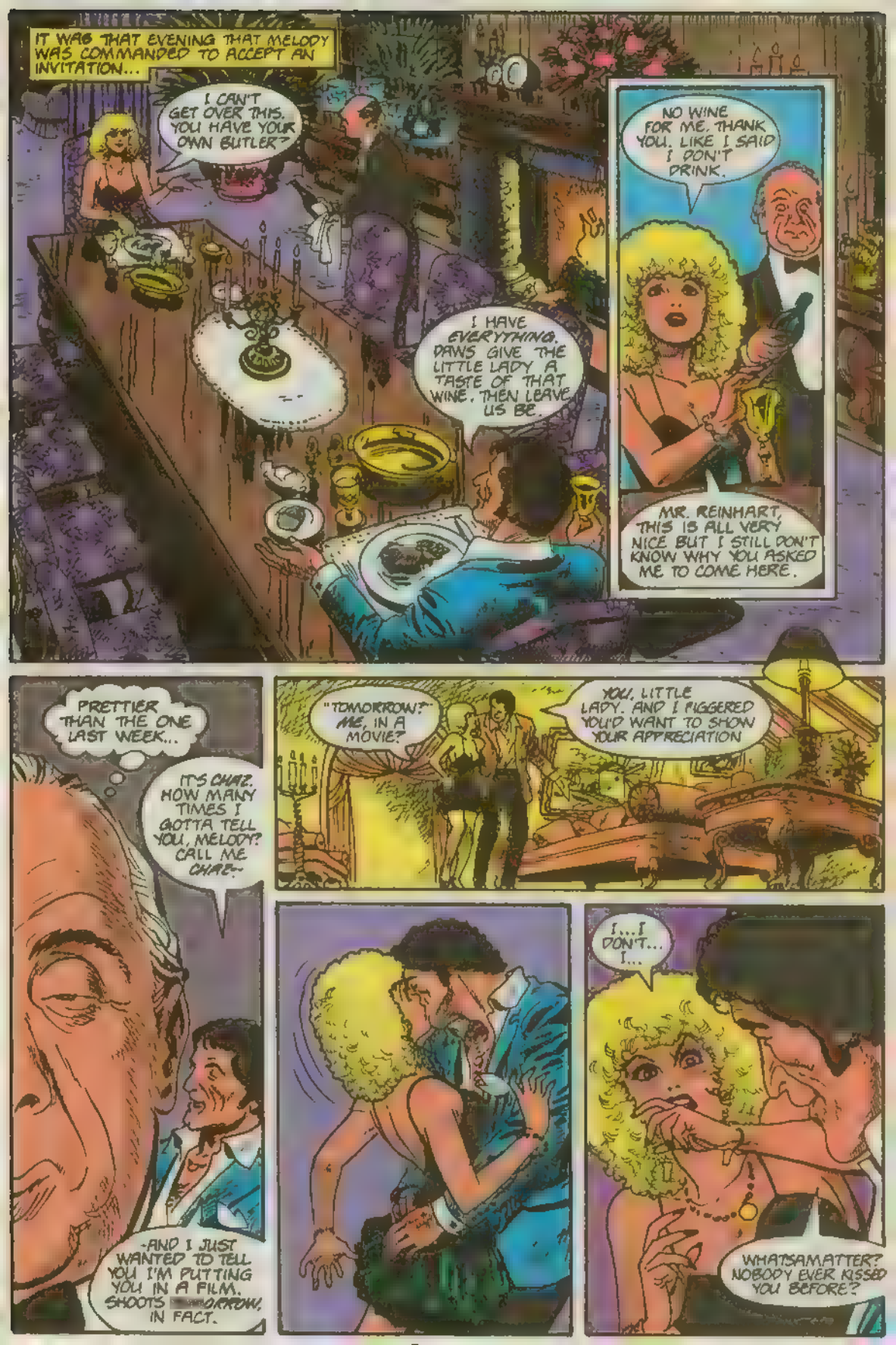
CRANK YOUR JAW AROUND IN SYNCH WITH BRIDGETTE'S PUNCH, MEL! HER FIST WILL *JUST* MISS YOU!

YOU GOT A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE I'M GONNA PUT *YOU* IN FRONT OF A CAMERA, LADY.

NOW, CATCH A QUICK SHOWER BEFORE TUMBLING CLASS.

NO WAY TO MAKE A LIVING, INDEED..
I WISH JERRY HAD TOLD ME HOW TO PROVE THAT CHAZ IS NEGLIGENT...
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR
WILLY CALLED. WANTS TO KNOW IF YOU'VE FOUND A BODY YET TO DOUBLE EVA GOLD.
OH, I'VE FOUND A BODY, ALL RIGHT.
THERE'S NO WAY I'M GONNA GIVE HER ALL THE TRAINING SHE NEEDS BEFORE-HAND SO...
...SO I MAKE SURE SHE SIGNS ALL THE RELEASES?
IN TRIPLICATE.
FOR WEEKS, MELODY TRAINED WHILE LEO ASKED HIS (BY NOW) ETERNAL QUESTION..
NOPE. DON'T KNOW ANYONE WHO'S TAKEN REINHART'S CLASS.
HEY, I GOT ONE FOR YOU: MOE HOWARD'S LAST FILM?
"DOCTOR DEATH, SEEKER OF SOULS." AWFUL FILM. TWA RAN IT IN-FLIGHT AND FOLKS WALKED OUT ON IT.
OKAY, SPROCKET. THANKS.
EXCUSE ME WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT CHAZ REINHART'S STUNT SCHOOL?


YEAH. YOU DIDN'T HAPPEN TO GO THERE, DID YOU?
ONLY FOR A FEW WEEKS BUT I WAS--
MOVIE POSTERS
COME ON. I GOT SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS.
BUT WAIT! WHO ARE YOU? WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
HIS NAME WAS EDDIE FOLB AND HIS STORY WAS FAMILIAR...
CHAZ SAID IT WAS A JOB AND I NEEDED ONE... AND IT CAME WITH TRAINING. ONLY I DIDN'T READ WHAT I SIGNED...
IT WAS A RELEASE NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED TO ME, CHAZ WASN'T RESPONSIBLE
BUT THERE WAS MORE TO IT. CHAZ NEVER PAID ME MY "SALARY" DURING THE TRAINING... SAID SOME STUDIO WAS BEHIND IN PAYING HIM...
WHEN HE DID GET THE MONEY, HE DIDN'T PAY ME OR ANYONE... HIT US WITH "TRAINING FEES."
IT WAS IN THE FINE PRINT. IN EXCHANGE FOR THE TRAINING, HE GOT ALL OUR SALARIES DURING THAT PERIOD AND FOR DOING STUNTS.
YOU HEAR THAT, JERRY?
YEP. AND THAT, ALONG WITH ALL THE DATA I'VE PULLED ON CHAZ'S "ACCIDENT" RECORD OUGHTA DO IT.
TOMORROW MORNING, I CONFRONT THE GUY.


IT WAS THAT EVENING THAT MELODY WAS COMMANDED TO ACCEPT AN INVITATION...
I CAN'T GET OVER THIS. YOU HAVE YOUR OWN BUTLER?
I HAVE EVERYTHING. DAWS GIVE THE LITTLE LADY A TASTE OF THAT WINE. THEN LEAVE US BE.
NO WINE FOR ME, THANK YOU. LIKE I SAID I DON'T DRINK.
MR. REINHART, THIS IS ALL VERY NICE BUT I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY YOU ASKED ME TO COME HERE.
PRETTIER THAN THE ONE LAST WEEK...
IT'S CHAZ. HOW MANY TIMES I GOTTA TELL YOU, MELODY? CALL ME CHAZ--
-AND I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU I'M PUTTING YOU IN A FILM. SHOOTS TOMORROW, IN FACT.
"TOMORROW?" ME, IN A MOVIE?
YOU, LITTLE LADY. AND I FIGGERED YOU'D WANT TO SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION
I...I DON'T... I...
WHATSAMATTER? NOBODY EVER KISSED YOU BEFORE?

NOT WHEN I DIDN'T WANT THEM TO!

THANK YOU FOR THE DINNER, MR. REINHART. I HAVE TO GO.

WILL YOU BE NEEDING THE TRAPEZE TONIGHT, SIR?

DAWS, GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

VERY WELL, SIR.

MELODY FELT IN DESPERATE NEED OF A FRIEND. AND RON GAGE, EVEN UNABLE TO SPEAK, WAS THE CLOSEST THING SHE HAD TO ONE IN TOWN...

I WAS TRYING TO HELP JERRY AND LEO...AND YOU, RON...FIND OUT ABOUT MR REINHART FROM INSIDE...

BUT IT'S NOT WORKING NOTHING I'VE DONE SINCE I GOT TO THIS TOWN HAS WORKED.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT. THINGS WORK FOR OTHER PEOPLE THINGS GO RIGHT.

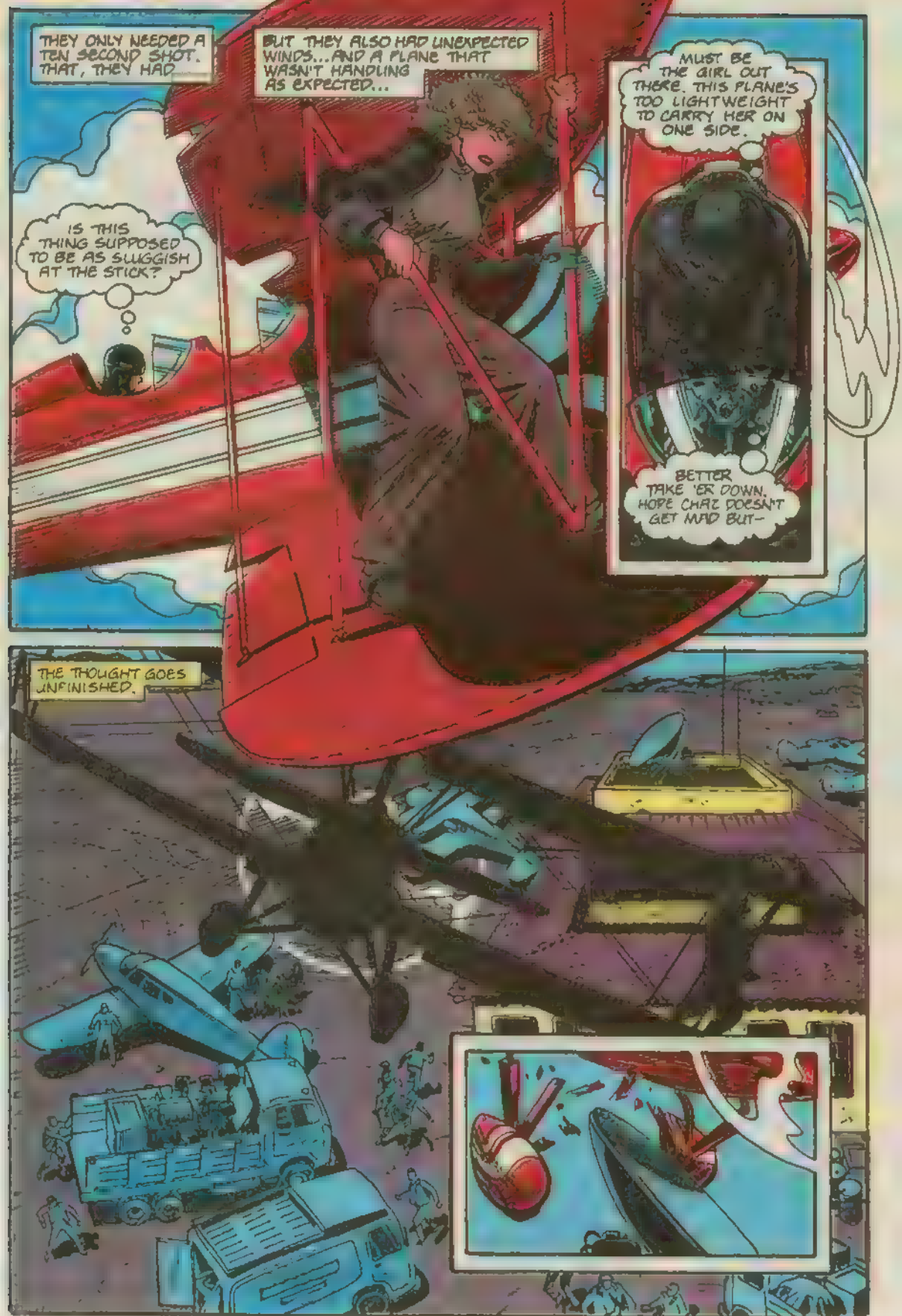
WHAT'S WRONG WITH *ME?*

SHE WAS SURE SHE HEARD IT. HIS VOICE.
IT WAS ALL SHE NEEDED TO HEAR..
I SAID, "NOTHING'S WRONG WITH YOU." CLEAR AS DAY, RON'S VOICE. TELLING HER IT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT.
THE DOCTOR SAID HE WOULD NEVER TALK AGAIN BUT THE DOCTOR WAS WRONG RON'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.
THIS IS WILSON, THIRD DEGREE BURNS. A KILN EXPLOSION IN A CERAMICS SHOP.
ISN'T THIS THE KID WHO WAS BURNED DURING THAT MOTORCYCLE STUNT?
OH, NO. WE LOST HIM THIS AFTERNOON. POOR KID...DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE.
THE NEXT DAY, FULL OF RENEWED DETERMINATION, MELODY REPORTED TO "WORK" TO RESIGN, ONLY TO DISCOVER..
YOU CAN'T QUIT. I NEED A BODY TODAY TO DOUBLE EVA GOLD AND YOU'RE IT!
BUT I CAN'T DO A STUNT LIKE THAT. I COULD GET KILLED!
YOU LEAVE ME STRANDED NOW AND I'LL GUARANTEE IT!
YOU OWE ME SIX THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR THE TRAINING I'VE GIVEN YOU!
SIX THOUSAND DOLLARS? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SIX THOUSAND DOLLARS? I DON'T HAVE SIX THOUSAND DOLLARS!

THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO DO THE STUNT.
JUST SO HAPPENS, IT PAYS SIX THOUSAND DOLLARS.
TWO HOURS LATER...
POOR MELODY WAIT'LL SHE HEARS ABOUT RON.
SHE HAD TO KNOW HE WOULDN'T MAKE IT.
RIGHT NOW, MY MAIN INTEREST IS STOPPING REINHART FROM KILLING ANY-ONE ELSE.
AT THE STUNT SCHOOL, HE DEMANDED TO SEE CHAZ REINHART. BUT...
EVERYONE'S OUT ON LOCATION AT 29 PALMS. THE AIRFIELD.
"LOCATION?" HE'S SHOOTING ANOTHER STUNT? PUTTING SOME OTHER KID'S LIFE ON THE LINE?
I HOPE THIS ONE'S OKAY. IT'S THAT NEW GIRL HE TOOK IN. THE REAL CUTE ONE.
GOD ALMIGHTY!
MELODY'S NOT THAT DUMB. BUT, JUST IN CASE...
29 PALMS WAS THE PREFERRED SHOOTING SITE FOR LIGHT AIRPLANE STUNTS..
WHY WOULD SHE DO IT, LEO? SHE SAW WHAT CHAZ REINHART CAN DO TO A PERSON... SAW IT WITH HER OWN EYES!
HEY, IF I COULD FIGURE OUT WOMEN, I'D HAVE ONE.
DRIVE FASTER. YOUR TIRES ARE STILL TOUCHING THE ROAD.

WHILE...
I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS, I TELL YOU.
STOP WHINING. IT'S PERFECTLY SAFE... YOU GOT YOUR SAFETY HARNESS...
AND CHET'S A TERRIFIC PILOT, AREN'T YOU, CHET?
YEAH. JUST GOT MY LICENSE LAST MONTH, IN FACT. THOUGH I NEVER FLEW ONE OF THESE, MR. REINHART--
HEY, IF IT'S GOT TWO WINGS, IT'S ALL THE SAME. ANYWAY, I TRAINED HIM.
OH, GOD, I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS, I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS, I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS--
THIS ISN'T A MOVIE. THIS IS MY LIFE!
THEY WERE SECONDS TOO LATE...
THAT'S MEL UP THERE!
SHE'S OUT OF HER EVER-LOVIN' MIND!

THE INSERT SHOTS OF EVA GOLD WOULD BE SHOT IN A SOUNDSTAGE SOMEWHERE WITH REAR PROCESS PROJECTION...
BUT, FOR THE LONG SHOTS, IT WAS VERY REAL. ONLY IT WASN'T EVA GOLD...
DON'T LOOK DOWN. DON'T LOOK DOWN. DON'T LOOK DOWN.
REINHART, IF ONE EYELASH ON THAT GIRL GETS BENT, I'M GONNA THROW YOU OFF THE TALLEST BUILDING I CAN FIND--
--WITHOUT AN AIRBAG!
RELAX, NAYLOR SHE'S HAD TRAINING
HAVE YOU TAUGHT HER ABOUT A BOLO-RELEASE? DID YOU COUNTERBALANCE FOR THE OPPOSITE WING? IS THAT PILOT RATED FOR THIS?
WHAT'S A BOLO-RELEASE?
DID YOU AT LEAST CALCULATE THE WIND RESISTANCE IN THE DIRECTION YOU'VE GOT THE PILOT FLYING?
OH HELL, THAT KIND OF STUFF'S NOT NECESSARY.


THEY ONLY NEEDED A TEN SECOND SHOT. THAT, THEY HAD.
BUT THEY ALSO HAD UNEXPECTED WINDS... AND A PLANE THAT WASN'T HANDLING AS EXPECTED...
IS THIS THING SUPPOSED TO BE AS SLUGGISH AT THE STICK?
MUST BE THE GIRL OUT THERE. THIS PLANE'S TOO LIGHTWEIGHT TO CARRY HER ON ONE SIDE.
BETTER TAKE 'ER DOWN. HOPE CHAZ DOESN'T GET MAD BUT-
THE THOUGHT GOES UNFINISHED.

THEY LOST THEIR WHEELS!
THAT'S CALLED LANDING GEAR! WITHOUT IT, THE PLANE CAN'T LAND!
HE CAN DO A BELLY-LANDING. I PUT ONE OF THOSE DOWN MYSELF, ONCE.
DID YOU HAVE A GIRL TIED TO YOUR WING?
YOU THINK SHE'S GONNA GET HURT?
NO...
...I THINK SHE'S GONNA GET KILLED.

CONTINUED...

SHOW BUSINESS

by Mark Evanier

Cartoons by Aragonés

Thank you. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you.

This is being written in room 4315 of the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas, partly because I schlepped the laptop computer along on my trip and felt the obligation to use it; partly because I thought it would be a welcome change to push some buttons in this town without it costing me large sums of cash. And I suppose there's a third reason: This is a column about Show Biz and I'm presently surrounded by it.

Hey, thank you. What a wonderful audience. Give yourselves a hand.

Gambling is all about entertainment. It certainly isn't about winning money. Many journey here with a few hundred in their trousers, envisioning some mass clean-out of the hotel's bank vault. But they very quickly go through what I call the Three Stages of Gambling...

FIRST STAGE: "I'm going to win a ton of money here. Just watch."

SECOND STAGE: "Listen, if you can just break even in this place, it's a real moral victory."

THIRD STAGE: "Okay, so I lost a few hundred dollars but, hey, the point is to have a good time and, by the way, I got a great breakfast for free."

Great breakfast for free. Only in Vegas does a man lose six hundred dollars at the slots and go home, waxing proud that he scored some sausage patties at below cost.

How about a nice hand for the guys in the band? Hey, that's Sticks Mandalay on drums. Let's hear it for Sticks!

Here's an interesting statistic: The average person who walks in the door of a casino in this town leaves with forty dollars less than he/she came in with. Forty dollars. That's the average, give or take a chip or two.

(And if you *do* walk out with more than you walked in with, you know what they call that money? You know what casino employees call the money of theirs you took out of the building? They call it a "loan," as in, "We just loaned that guy three hundred." A loan. That's what they call it. That kinda says it, doesn't it?)

Up and down the strip, on marquee after marquee, you see cheapo bargains being advertised, chief among them the famed 99-cent Shrimp Cocktail. There was a time, legend has it, back before the hotels learned that three families from Oklahoma can lose just as much as one High Roller, when they didn't want anyone but the big players in these places. They didn't want anyone who would *care* about getting a shrimp cocktail and change for a buck. So the marquees advertised the names that brought in those willing to ante up the black ($100) chips in piles: Frank, Sammy, Dino, etc.. Today, judging from the signs, the biggest star on the strip is the $4.99 Prime Rib Dinner.

No one ever asks just what kind of shrimp is in a 99-cent Shrimp Cocktail, just as no one ever asks if the $4.99 Prime Rib is from a cow that expired in this decade. No one particularly cares if the shrimp are any good. The point is they're ninety-nine cents. We're talking bargain here. No matter that, if you're the average player, that shrimp cocktail's really going to run you $40.99.

Hey, we got any outta-towners here? Where ya from? Hey, is everybody having a good time?

Forget Siegfried and Roy: The best show in Vegas is the people. They come from everywhere. Folks here say, "Where are you from?" with the same kneejerk camaraderie that makes them say, "Have a nice day" in almost any other city. An astounding proportion of the men are clad in polyester leisure suits that I believe one could not even buy in Los Angeles, were one of such a mind. The women all look like somebody's aunt.

There's a belief, fostered by the many who want it to be true, that Vegas is not even remotely on the same planet as anywhere else you might visit. It's a world unto itself with Reno and Tahoe as its two moons.

And nothing you do here counts, morality-wise. Folks who would never dream of gambling five dollars back home will wager five weeks' pay on games they don't necessarily understand. And they won't ask questions because they don't want the casino folks to think them unfit to be in this glamorous environment.

Or they'll go to shows more risque than

anything they would watch back in Idaho. Or drink. It's like God has given them special dispensation from all concept of Sin: You can do anything you like as long as you do it in Las Vegas. I don't know if it's still true — smoking becoming increasingly unfashionable — but it used to be that people who never smoked at home would smoke while they were in Vegas. In fact, ex-smokers who dared not light one up back home for fear of renewing their old addictions would come to Vegas, smoke the entire time, then stop when they boarded the plane home without the slightest withdrawal symptom. Like I said, I don't know if that's still the case. But I can tell you this: When they stop smoking altogether in the real world, they'll still be smoking in Vegas.

Hey, love you all. How many people here are ahead? Anyone here won anything yet?

There are three classic gambling jokes about Las Vegas:

Classic Gambling Joke #1: Guy comes up to me and says, "Buddy, I know you don't know me but I'm desperate. My wife's in the hospital, we got no insurance and she needs an operation desperately to save her life. I know you don't know me but could you see your way to letting me have a couple bucks?" I say, "That's very touching...but how do I know you won't run right into that casino and gamble it?" And the guy goes, "Oh, no. I've got gambling money." (Ba-*DOOP*-Wam!)

Classic Gambling Joke #2: A woman goes up to her husband at the dice table and asks for twenty dollars. He says, "Again? I gave you twenty dollars just two hours ago! You want I should give you another twenty dollars so you can just go throw it away?" She says, "How about you? You're down thirty thousand dollars!" And the husband says, "Yes, but I know how to gamble!" (Ba-*RUMP*-Bump!)

Classic Gambling Joke #3: It's not true that you can't win in Las Vegas. Why, I knew a guy who drove to Vegas in a $20,000 Cadillac and went home in a $200,000 Greyhound! (Ba-*DOOMP-Bam!)*

Everyone here laughs at gambling jokes for the same reason everyone here's just so friendly towards one another: Shared suffering. They've all been there, all sat smugly with 20 in Blackjack and watched the dealer draw five cards to make 21 and take their money. Some hotels have occasionally toyed with the notion, for competitive reasons, of liberalizing their gaming rules to make them a tad easier to beat or, at least, not clean the guest out quite so quickly. That they don't do this is predicated on a belief, probably true, that most folks wouldn't notice. After all, the biggest thing in Vegas is the slot machines and no one knows what the odds are on most slots. Or asks.

And folks continue to play Keno even though it would be far more time-efficient to just tear up the money. (Someone once gave me a home computer program that would replicate exactly, the casino odds for Keno. I set it to Autoplay one morn before leaving and when I came back that night, the computer had played 100,000 rounds of Keno and had yet to hit a real jackpot. To this day, I owe my computer around $194,000.)

You from outta-town? From where? Ya having fun here? Hey, don't drink too much.

Everything in Vegas is designed to (1) get you into the casino and (1a) keep you there. There is no (2).

At no other cities' hotels will the door captain grab up your valises and offer to check them and/or see that they get to your room so you don't have to worry about them now. Translation: *Get into the casino where you belong!* They don't do that in any other town. Except Reno, Tahoe and Atlantic City.

And, no matter what door you go in, you're in the casino. To get anywhere, you have to go through the casino. To get into the buffet, to see the show, to pick up your free bonus coupon book and your cheap shrimp cocktail and your complimentary keyring, you have to go to the back of the casino and stand in line along rows of waiting, inviting slot machines. And especially to turn your chips back into money: You can turn money into chips anywhere but in order to cash in, you have to hunt down the Cashier's Window, rarely easy to find. That they don't have more of these windows and that they're never busy should tip you off to how few folks ever wind up with chips to convert to real currency.

In Vegas, money means everything and money means nothing.

When Disneyland (which is basically the same as Vegas but with mouse ears) started, someone — Walt, probably — came up with the notion of not having each ride cost Dad actual greenbacks. Instead, you bought ticket books at the front gate and then everything was an "A" ticket or an "E" ticket and you could enjoy the Matterhorn without thinking of the tickets representing real money. In Vegas, it works the same with chips and coupons except that the disassociation goes one step further: After a few hours, you stop thinking of real money as representing real money. (See *Classic Gambling Joke #1* above)

In Reno (which is basically the same as Vegas, only more bow-legged), I once was given a V.I.P. tour of the Counting Room at one of the big hotels. It was a little, well-guarded room in the bowels of the casino, where the drop-boxes on each table are opened and the contents, counted and stacked.

Crumpled bills were emptied into plastic trash cans and handled with the same regard

as raked-up leaves. I saw one woman spill a hundred grand or so over a carpeting already covered with bills. She shrugged — it was just so much paper to her — and said something like, "Oh, I'll pick that up before I go to lunch if I remember."

That attitude — *"it's only paper"* — bleeds upstairs to the casino where niggardly folks who clip 25-cents-off coupons back home will peel off hundreds to get back into the game. Once, at Caesar's Palace, L.V., I sat at a Blackjack table with a man who kept up a loud and running gripe over how a $2.00 long distance charge had wrongly turned up on his hotel bill. And as he was complaining, he was playing hundred-dollar chips (badly) until they were gone and then chasing them with more cash from his wallet.

That's not as big a contradiction as it might seem; not if you figure this man's main goal as not being taken for a hick. He raised a stink about the hotel bill because he didn't want to be taken for a hick. And he played at the big money table and didn't admit that he should have stopped because he didn't want to be taken for a hick. (See *Classic Gambling Joke #2* above)

Hey, you want to know how to beat the tables in Vegas? When you get off the plane, walk right into the propeller!

In Vegas, everything is open twenty-four hours. Everything. Except the airport. The airport shuts tight around Midnight and doesn't open up until 6 AM. Judging by how many flights take off as soon as it opens and by how many other cities with one-tenth the air traffic have found it necessary to be open all night, you would think that McCarran Field ought to be operational around- the-clock. And it ought to be, no one disagrees. But if the airport were open all night then some folks might fly home then instead of spending those nights in those lovely hotel rooms that you have to walk through the casinos to get to. Which is why the airport in Vegas is not open all night.

There are slot machines in the airport in Las Vegas. They are said to be among the worst, odds-wise, in town and there are three logical reasons for this.

One is that one hotel supplies all the slot machines in the airport so they're not worried about you going across the street and playing somewhere else. Once you're at the airport, you play their machines. And you usually play until your coins are gone. You don't really want to carry all those quarters through the metal detector now, do you?

Secondly: In order to get the contract to put the slots in the airport, the hotel had to bid to cut the airport in on the action so they're splitting the take. But the machines cost the same to buy and maintain (your basic one-armed bandit costs the hotel about five grand new). Ergo, worse odds so they can make more off them.

And, lastly, if the hotel is going to have big pay-offs on its slots, they want it to happen at the slots in their hotel, not at the airport, so the hotel gets the publicity. What good does it do them to have someone win a million bucks at the airport?

But people play the slots at the airport, especially when waiting for departure. Prolonging the losing is a way of keeping that Las Vegas vacation going just a wee bit longer. Because, once you get on the plane, it's over. And you have to stop smoking and drinking and staying up 'til all hours.

Here's my favorite Las Vegas Trivia Question. Only twice in the history of Vegas has all play at the tables been halted in note of someone's passing. Once, all gaming was suspended for a full hour; on another occasion, it was stopped for one minute. Who were the two people so honored? Answer in a moment.

But seriously, folks: The main thing I want to say about Las Vegas is that it's about Show Business. Your average American still has this notion that Show Biz is this glamorous world and that glamour is something that happens to other people. Here though, you can sure come close to it.

And it need not even be entertaining: Don

Rickles' current act offers precious little besides the opportunity to go home and tell the neighbors that you saw Don Rickles in person. That man who used to be so funny calling Carson a hockey puck eschews humor for singing and dancing (and sweating; he is one of the few performers to regularly receive standing ovations for quantity of perspiration). In the course of his set, he talks at length of the God-given miracle that is America, then applies much the same reverence to Frank Sinatra. At one point, amidst the *shvitzing* and name-dropping, Rickles is amazed to discover his valet standing at the foot of the stage with a glass of ice water for him. The man they call "Mr. Warmth" is surprised and touched, almost to tears, by the gesture — as he will continue to be surprised and touched by it, twice a night for the balance of his engagement — and he makes a little speech about his loyal valet, kisses the old man on the head and sends him off, hoping the audience has enjoyed witnessing such a warm, spontaneous moment.

Don Rickles is not naive about Las Vegas; there must be a reason he thinks tourists would prefer a phony touching scene to, say, actual humor.

There are stars here, sometimes entertaining ones. As production shows — spectacles with feathers and smoke and women with too much make-up and not enough shirts — have gained in popularity, some speculated that the day of the Superstar was going bye-bye. No chance. Even in this town, no one knowledge able would cover that bet. Vegas could do without cards before it could do without Stars.

Here's a story which, if it isn't true, oughta be: Years ago, one of the big production shows had, among the things it produced, an underwater ballet complete with a dolphin that swam in and removed a bathing beauty's top. Word reached an Animal Rights group (one of the dancers tipped them) that this dolphin was otherwise being kept in an oversized bathtub and, moreover, was being starved all day so that it would go straight for the food that comprised the swimmer's bra-clasp. The Animal Rights group protested to everyone in power at the hotel, right up to the tip-top, and were impolitely told to drop dead, go away, get lost. So the humane folks started trying to enlist Powerful People in their crusade to get this dolphin out of the show. One by one, the biggest stars in Hollywood called the hotel management and were told to drop dead, go away, etc.. The activists got Senators and Governors to call. Same answer, liberally adorned with profanity. The hotel Prez said that the dolphin was staying in and he didn't care if God himself objected.

Then the activists got an idea. They dispatched one of their ranks to call on Wayne Newton in his dressing room one night before his own show at another hotel. Wayne listened, picked up the phone, called the first hotel and said, "Take the dolphin out of the show." Just like that. This was slightly before the 8:00 performance and the dolphin didn't go on that night or ever again; the next day, they shipped it off to an aquarium.

Okay, here's the answer to our Trivia Question. The gaming in Vegas stopped for one hour in honor of John F. Kennedy and for one minute in honor of Howard R. Hughes. Those who know Las Vegas well were surprised that it wasn't the other way around.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, the comedy star of our show...put your hands and hearts together and welcome, if you please...

At one time, the biggest show in town in the biggest hotel was "Jubilee" at the MGM Grand. The MGM Grand is now Bally's Grand — you wouldn't believe how many lion insignias they had to remove — and the biggest hotel is now, by comparison to newer ones, mid-sized. Some say that "Jubilee" has shrunk, as well: Smaller cast, smaller orchestra, costumes that have gotten frayed.

There is one number in "Jubilee" that has become something of a running joke around Vegas folks who stage such shows. It's a Roman orgy in which the stage is peopled with beautiful women and the well-muscled men who are dancing with them, lifting them, fondling them, everyone clad in little more than dental floss. And while I know nothing of the sexual preferences of the boy dancers, they sure move like there's a big cash award for the gayest step. The mighty warriors are supposed to be having their way with the women but their way is noticeably lacking in even the slightest hint of heterosexuality. I kept expecting Samson to consummate his relationship with Delilah by styling her hair. It is that rarity in entertainment: A number to offend gays and straights equally.

Before I saw "Jubilee," I sat at a table with a pair of charming little ladies who probably averaged eighty years of age between them. You get two drinks with your admission and the ladies had a problem: Each of them wanted something alcoholic but neither of them wanted *two* somethings alcoholic. With the wisdom of a Solomon, I leaned over and suggested that one of them order two alcoholic drinks and the other order ginger ales and then they could swap off. This, they happily did.

As the show started, they sat there happily with their one margarita apiece and everything was fine until the first number in which most of the girl dancers were *sans tops*. This, the elderly ladies had somehow not expected.

I heard Muriel whisper to Hortense, "I didn't know this was that kind of show."

Hortense whispered back, "My goodness, I didn't, either."

They each watched a little more and then Muriel whispered, "I guess this kind of thing is normal here."

Hortense looked about at the others in the audience, none of whom were charging for the exits, and agreed: "They have this kind of thing in night clubs in Paris, I believe."

They watched a little more, then Muriel said, "Well, we *are* in Las Vegas." Hortense agreed, yes, they were in Las Vegas, all right.

And, having concurred that it was not immoral to watch this, so long as you watched it in Vegas, they sat there and loved every moment of it. The joy of doing something a little naughty.

On the way out, I heard Muriel say to Hortense, "My, but those young women sure take good care of their bodies."

And Hortense said, "I'm not sure but I think a few of those young men were homosexual."

Hey, you've been just marvelous, ladies and gentlemen. Did everyone have a good time? I can't hear you. DID YOU HAVE A GOOD TIME?

The first few times I came to Vegas, my Blackjack playing was pretty dreadful. I was, however, playing a dynamite game of Twenty-Two. So I read up on the subject of 21 and studied the ways of Revere and Uston and all those college professors back in the sixties who, when no one was looking, would program the university computer to play fifty thousand hands of Blackjack, all to figure out if you should hit when you have soft 18 and the dealer has a ten up (you should). And I got rather good at it, though I didn't enjoy it as much as I thought I would.

When you get serious about Blackjack, it can be like going to work. You have to be prepared to put in more than a ten-hour day, waiting for a string of the right cards. A top player can sit there three weeks past forever, hovering about break-even, waiting for the cards to go right. And you're tense because to win big money, you have to be prepared to wager big money and no strategy works all the time. And even when you sit at a No Smoking table, there's smoke; there's *always* smoke. *And* the need to purge your mind of all thoughts but for those damned cards. *And* to miss other things there you'd rather do. When you walk away a few thousand ahead, as I managed, a couple times, it isn't so much that you won the money as that you feel you earned it. Which means it's not nearly as much fun.

So I let my Blackjack game go, failed before this visit to brush-up with the flash-cards and forgot most of the eight-jillion card-combo rules I once knew. I forgot how to concentrate, too. All day yesterday at the tables, I was chatting with my fellow players, figuring which shows to take in, not paying nearly enough attention to my cards.

And I won't say it was more fun to lose this way than to win, the other —

— but those folks over at the two-dollar tables sure seem to be a lot happier than the people at the $25 minimum stations.

See, the only way to really win in Vegas is to quit. (See *Classic Gambling Joke #3* above)

You have to stop while you're ahead... which, to most people, means the vacation ends long before your flight leaves. So they keep on playing until they run out of money or vacation, usually the former. I'm ahead of Vegas for my lifetime and I'd feel like an animated neon schmuck if I gave it all back, repaid my "loan."

Which I guess explains why I'm up here in 4315 instead of down where all the action is. Among the many things the hotels do to keep you playing is to, throughout much of the day, offer darn near nothing else to do *but* play. So you play. And if you play like I was playing, you lose. And if you were smart enough to bring your laptop along, you go upstairs instead and write an article.

True, I could do this at home. But look at it this way: As long as I'm doing this, I'm not down at the tables.

And even though I don't get paid for these essays, the way I've been playing this trip, this could be among the most profitable writing I've ever done.

—*Mark Evanier*

epic-grams

Being that he's off doing the glad-handing business thing, Epic Comics Exec Editor, Carl Potts, asked me to fill in for him on this month's column. Business, indeed. Personally, I think Carl's still on his quest for the World's Perfect Fishing Hole!

The late September United Kingdom Comic Art Convention in London served not only to be a very congenial atmosphere to rub elbows with some of the writers and artists in the Epic Comics employ but also serves as a fairly effective lead into

TAKING A LOOK BACK. . .

As we had hoped, the long-awaited and critically-acclaimed 4-issue **Last American** series has proved to be a big hit! I had a chance to meet with writer **Alan Grant** and artist **Mike McMahon** who were on hand to spread good cheer. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to hook up with Alan's co-writer on the project, **John Wagner**.

The year 1990 also produced another winner — the adaptation of **Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser**, with the creative team of writer **Howard Chaykin** and artists **Mike Mignola, Al Williamson** and **Sherliyn Van Valkenburgh**, it was nothing less than expected.

NO REST FOR THE WEARY

The office flat files are beginning to bulge with scripts and artwork as we prepare for the Epic Comics **1991 line**. Here's a few of my Hot Picks. . .

If you like satire, samurai warrior action, sword and sorcery adventure or even feline fury, the **Samurai Cat** will be for you. Penciler **Frank Cirocco** and inker **Jim Hummel** handle the art chores. Painted covers for this 3-issue, 32-page offset series are done by **Mark Rogers** himself.

A couple of other goodies brewing in the pot include a 4-issue series of original material featuring **Captain Confederacy** of Steel Dragon Press fame and a sci-fi project written by the aforementioned Mr. Grant with the art being produced in . . . well, you'll just have to tune in to future columns to find out more details on this mysterious piece of business.

Stick around, I think you'll like what you see . . .

—Nel Yomtov

checklist

JANUARY PREMIERE!

METROPOL #1—Strange things are happening: mysterious deaths, mad dogs running wild, and a mass murderer terrorizing the city. But that's just the beginning. In the middle of it all is Jasper Notochord, one man who is about to begin a journey that will lead the city—and the world—to the edge of Armageddon! Beginning a bizarre new monthly series from Ted McKeever. For mature readers.

LIMITED SERIES

CADILLACS AND DINOSAURS #5 of 6—Two more beautifully illustrated tales of the Xenozoic Age—as Jack searches to discover Hannah's secrets, we trace the trials of a sheepdog protecting his herd from dinosaurs! By Mark Shultz with Steven Stiles.

THE NEW ALIEN LEGION: ON THE EDGE #3 of 3—The conclusion to the bookshelf series finds Nomad Squadron free from the Black Hole, but kicked forward in time 15 years to a harsh future, where Legionnaires wear "obedience collars" and Nomad becomes a strictly suicide squadron! Written by Chuck Dixon, illustrated by Larry Stroman with Mark Farmer.

ATOMIC AGE #3 of 4—The alien Nimbus and his prey are both stalked by an ambitious Army Colonel and a hotdog reporter—each for his own purpose! Written by Frank Lovece, art by Mike Okamoto and Al Williamson.

FAFHRD & THE GRAY MOUSER #4 of 4—Two more of Fritz Leiber's acclaimed sword and sorcery tales: The roguish duo battle mystical creatures, zombies and the charms of an evil sorceress, and are pitted against each other in a tale of manipulation and deceit. Adapted by the all-star team of Howard Chaykin, Mike Mignola, and Al Williamson.

THE LAST AMERICAN #4 of 4—Ulysses S. Pilgrim finds a journal that holds the answers he seeks—are there any humans left alive on Earth? Written by John Wagner and Alan Grant, art by Mike McMahon.

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF CHOLLY AND FLYTRAP #2 of 3—Cholly continues to search for the kidnapped Flytrap in a post-apocalyptic world of deception and danger! By Arthur Suydam. For mature readers.

GROO THE WANDERER #75—Conclusion to the 3 parter featuring Groo (make that King Groo) with amnesia. His memory returns—at exactly the wrong moment. By Sergio Aragonés with Mark Evanier.

HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTARS #4—Part 2 of a 3 parter exposing the seamy side of the Hollywood stunt-man business. Lots of spectacular and deadly motorcycle, car, and airplane stunt action by Hollywood insider Mark Evanier. Art by Dan Spiegle and Sergio Aragonés.

CLIVE BARKER'S NIGHTBREED #8—The flesh-eating Nightbreed strike a deal with a human arms dealer to wipe out Cabal and his Nightbreed companions, once and for all. Written by D.G. Chichester, art by Mike Manley.

STALKERS #12—Final issue, featuring deadly showdowns and a critical controversy! Written by Jan Strnad and Mark Verheiden. Art by Val Mayerik.

TOMORROW KNIGHTS #6—The dramatic climax as the Knights face Kievyn Karr's mysterious "Project New Rodina"—a plan that spells death for the Soviet Union and the Tomorrow Knights! Written and illustrated by Roy Richardson and Rod Whigham.